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## EDITORIALS†

### CALIFORNIA PHYSICIANS' SERVICE: A STATE-WIDE MEDICAL SERVICE BY THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL PROFESSION

**Action Taken by the California Medical Association House of Delegates.**—Since December 17-18, 1938, when the House of Delegates of the California Medical Association met, responding to a call by the California Medical Association Council at its meeting of November 12, the citizenry of California and, in fact, of the United States, have been aware, through the press association dispatches, that a new form of medical service, on a state-wide plan, was about to be tried out in California. The text of the call for the special session of the Association's supreme legislative body—the House of Delegates—and the reasons for convening the delegates were given in the editorial and other departments of the December and January issues of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. The following comments, therefore, will deal more with subsequent events, such as the enabling resolutions of the Council, subsequently acted upon by the House of Delegates, which may be found on page 40 of the January issue of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL.

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**Steps in Further Organization.**—In accordance with the instructions given by the House of Delegates on December 18, the Council, on Saturday, January 14, 1939, took steps to bring about the incorporation of the new organization—a non-profit corporation, separate and distinct from the California Medical Association—and to indicate who among the members of the California Medical Association were to have the responsibility of serving as the first "administrative members" and the first "board of trustees."

The new organization, itself a corporation, naturally must have a governing body or board of directors; and this group is named the Board of Trustees. The trustees, in turn, must be elected by persons who possess voting qualifications as outlined in the Association's by-laws. These voters, who may or may not be doctors of medicine, are called administrative members, and the number of such is not to exceed seventy-five. Some of the

† Editorials on subjects of scientific and clinical interest, contributed by members of the California Medical Association, are printed in the Editorial Comment column which follows.

initial administrative members will give up their positions later to physicians who will be elected as regional representatives (two from a district) in a set-up that contemplates about fifteen such districts, into which California will be divided.

\* \* \*

**Incorporation Plans.**—When the House of Delegates met in Los Angeles on December 17, its members were given copies of the tentative drafts of the medical and hospitalization service plan as prepared by the Special Committee, and approved by the Council. The House, in turn, through its own Reference Committees, again as Committee of the Whole, and acting also as the House, considered and passed upon the plans proposed and submitted, and also gave instructions to the Council to proceed with the organization of the new nonprofit corporation. Some delay, as might be expected, is always encountered when an application for incorporation, needing signatures of incorporators residing in different parts of the State, is prepared for submittal to the State authorities. However, once the incorporation is completed, its Board of Trustees can begin to function officially, and further development of the plan should then proceed in an active manner. It is not possible to state definitely the period of time necessary to accomplish these ends, especially for an enterprise of such wide scope, for which, while it is important that no time be wasted, it is likewise equally desirable that no undue haste, likely to contribute to error, be evidenced.

\* \* \*

**Members of the First Board of Trustees.**—The group of seven physicians who have been named for places on the first board of trustees of this California Physicians' Service include the following: Drs. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Stanford University; Lowell S. Goin, Los Angeles; T. Henshaw Kelly, San Francisco; C. Kelly Canelo, San Jose; W. Earl Mitchell, Berkeley; Samuel Ayres, Los Angeles; Alson R. Kilgore, San Francisco.

For additional information concerning these and other organization steps, readers are referred to the California Medical Association department in this issue, on page 132.

\* \* \*

**Some Basic Purposes.**—It is well for all California physicians to keep in mind that the proposed medical-service plan is designed to operate on a nonprofit basis, and that it is to be a voluntary organization, both as regards the doctors of medicine, namely, the "professional members," who register to give service, and as pertains to citizens of certain income brackets who, through periodic payments, choose to avail themselves of the professional services so offered—this latter group to be known as "beneficiary members." The plan, it is equally well to observe, does not contemplate any essential interference with medical practice as it now exists. On the contrary, special efforts are and will continue to be made to maintain the standards of medical practice and of scientific medicine, as they now obtain, and to promote their continued and legitimate development.

**Not an Insurance Plan.**—The California Physicians' Service is not an insurance or similar health plan. Rather, it is a method which aims to make it possible for citizens of certain income classes, through periodic payments, to secure for themselves the professional services of physicians of their own choosing, exactly as they make such choice today, through payments rendered to the California Physicians' Service instead of to the doctors of medicine who gave the services. The California Physicians' Service, in turn, will then pay the physicians on what is called the unit basis.

The schedule of charges—or so-called fee table—to be used as the basis for payments will probably be one that is in accord with the averages in vogue for services rendered in California, and certainly not lower; and the payments to the physicians who have rendered service in a particular month will be on the "unit basis." Thus, to illustrate, if a certain service is rated as being entitled for remuneration, say, to the amount of five dollars, and the unit selected should be one dollar per unit, then the physician who had rendered and submitted a statement for five dollars would be credited as eligible for repayment on the basis of five units. Whether the unit would measure up to 100 per cent (one hundred cents on the dollar) would depend upon the amount of money remaining in the fund after administrative and hospitalization services had been covered.

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**Information Brochure in Preparation.**—The foregoing statements are made in the OFFICIAL JOURNAL to acquaint the members of the California Medical Association, in a general way, with some of the basic provisions in the "California Physicians' Service." The Council, however, has instructed its Special Committee to prepare a brochure that will give more explicit information on many details in which all doctors of medicine in California have a very natural interest. The pamphlet so prepared will be placed in the mails as promptly as possible, and a copy will be sent to every Doctor of Medicine licensed in California. In the meantime, it is well to remember that the California Physicians' Service is an organization that has been brought into being through action, carefully considered, by the House of Delegates, the representative body of elected delegates in whom is vested the supreme authority to act for the members of the Association. That action having been taken, the responsibility for carrying the plan through to satisfactory end-results will be vested jointly in the officers of the new corporation and the members of the California Medical Association. With careful thinking and whole-hearted coöperation, the plan should soon be put into successful operation.

#### DEL MONTE ANNUAL SESSION

**This Year's Programs Have Exceptional Lure.**—In all years, the advice to attend the annual session of the California Medical Association may be properly given; but this year the suggestion comes with special force to members of the